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Human Services Secretary Highlights Medicaid Expansion Results on PA 4th Anniversary

Harrisburg, PA — Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today marked the fourth anniversary of Governor Tom Wolf's Medicaid expansion by releasing a Medicaid data dashboard and updated Medicaid expansion report highlighting data trends and the impacts of Medicaid coverage. Since 2015, more than 1 in 10 Pennsylvanians have been covered at some point because of Medicaid expansion, which currently provides coverage for nearly 700,000 Pennsylvanians.

"Four years ago, Governor Wolf announced that Pennsylvania would expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act," Sec. Miller said. "Through this coverage expansion, 1.4 million Pennsylvanians have accessed health coverage through Medicaid since 2015, and our uninsured rate is down to 5.5 percent – the lowest in Pennsylvania's history."

Medicaid expansion helps working Pennsylvanians access comprehensive health care coverage that would otherwise be unaffordable. The updated 2019 Medicaid Expansion Report builds upon a first report issued in 2016 to show the positive effects Medicaid expansion has had on Pennsylvania's uninsured rate, uncompensated care for hospitals, and improved access to preventive screenings and substance use disorder treatment. These results showcase the improved access coupled with a reduction in uncompensated care – a trend that helps bend health care costs in both the private and public market.

In addition to the report, DHS released a Medicaid data dashboard, an online tool that outlines and visualizes data from both the Medicaid expansion and general Medicaid population. The dashboard includes information on who accesses Medicaid in Pennsylvania, enrollment, and spending data. Data currently available on the dashboard serves as its initial launch, and more information on coverage, service utilization, and personal stories of Medicaid recipients will be added over time.

"It is important that we understand how our programs serve people and the role they play in their lives," said Secretary Miller. "I hope the report and dashboard will serve as resources to help more people understand the critical role Medicaid plays for more than 2.8 million Pennsylvanians and they keep their stories in mind moving forward."

Secretary Miller also highlighted a report published by the University of Pennsylvania to study the Medicaid population and how a work requirement would affect this population. The study found that a Medicaid work requirement would likely affect more than 800,000 Pennsylvanians. However, when you remove individuals who would receive an exemption, are already working, or have been on Medicaid for less than a year, about 90,000 people would remain.

"A work requirement does not automatically give people the skills they need to succeed in a family-sustaining job, and making work a requirement for health care access will either keep them in a cycle of low-wage jobs that keep people reliant on public assistance programs or

jeopardize access to health care completely,” said Secretary Miller. “Meeting a person’s health needs is an important first step to helping them excel in education, training, and the workforce.”

Secretary Miller was also joined by Cindy Jennings, who was able to get coverage through Medicaid expansion following a divorce and loss of benefits. While covered through Medicaid expansion, a routine screening identified pre-cancerous polyps. Medicaid expansion helped Jennings access treatment, and she now has coverage through a new employer.

“Having access to affordable health care was one less worry for me. It allowed me to focus on finding work that would allow me to pay our bills and meet the needs of my son with disabilities,” said Jennings. “Medicaid expansion provided me with access to what turned out to be life-saving preventive health care. It enabled me to stay healthy so I could be there for my children and ensure their health.”

For more information about Medicaid in Pennsylvania and to view the data dashboard, expansion report, and Penn Study, click [here](#).

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